Using the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability for group work in community mental health

Here are some notes from a presentation made in 2007. The main focus is on how OT can provide more talking-based group work while still addressing the needs of people on Passive Participation and Imitative Participation, using the aims and treatment principles.

Using the Vona du Toit Model of Creative Ability (then called the model of creative ability) in a community-based service:

How do we use VdTMoCA in Resource Therapy?
- Handling Principles
- Structuring of sessions
- Social Components
- Psychological/ Emotional Component

When would the model be implemented?
- Assessment   Observation of social abilities, insight and ability to control emotions
- Groups   Resource Group

- Individual Work

How is the model implemented in Individual Sessions?
- Client levelled on **VdTMoCA**
- Session planned according to:
  - Aims of the level
  - Needs of the client

Example session **(Client on Self Presentation)**
- Baking session

Passive Participation Resource Group
- One umbrella topic with different aspects looked at over several sessions.
- Concrete aspects considered
- Slower Pace
- More consideration of individual aspects
- Revision improves carry over
- Facilitator has a high profile.

- Example topic: Balanced lifestyle
  - Sleep
  - Work
  - Leisure
  - Personal Care

Because these clients are at a passive participation level a certain amount of support is offered to help the clients to engage in the groups and to maintain participation in the sessions over a period of time. If a client misses a group support would be offered through telephone calls, emergency appointments (if appropriate), letters and contact with carers.

On this level the clients are aware of the norms and expectations, however they are not always able to comply with them, therefore a certain amount of leniency is offered. (A client will apologise for not attending and are aware they should be there but not able to do anything actively to overcome the obstacles.)

- One umbrella topic looked at over several sessions allows individual aspects of that topic to be looked at in more depth. For example the umbrella topic of "balanced lifestyles".
- This was considered over five sessions.
- The first session considered what a balanced lifestyle meant to the group, encouraged them to explore the balance in their life, through participation in the 4 life spheres of sleep, work, leisure and personal care, using a time pie chart.
- 4 separate sessions then focused on each of these 4 spheres, encouraging the group members to consider their participation in each of these spheres and how they could improve their functioning in these spheres.
- Breaking the topics into several sessions means:

*We are able to do sessions of one hour, a functional time period in which group members are able to maintain their concentration and attention.

*Separate sessions allows more consideration of the different aspects involved with the umbrella topic. This enables some facilitation of working through concrete thinking through to the more abstract concepts, although abstract thinking is not expected at this level.

*Using an umbrella topic over a number of sessions allows revision of previous aspects of that topic to be covered at the beginning of the sessions. This revision helps to improve the carry over/memory of the aspects previously covered.

*With clients at a passive participation level active engagement within the group setting is encouraged but not expected. This means that the facilitator has a high profile within the group and has to give a lot of support and encouragement to group members to keep them engaged with the topic being discussed. It is also the role of the facilitator to demonstrate appropriate social and group behaviours.

Session Example
Leisure Group: Welcoming and introduction
Group rules
Ice-breaker – Pair Game
Bridging – Discussion
Activity
Wind down – Discussion
The purpose of this group was to highlight to group members the benefits of having leisure activities in their life and highlighting where resources to participate/engage in leisure activities can be found.

Group members are provided with name badges each session, this facilitates carry over /memory for other group members names and decreases the likelihood of embarrassment of not being able to remember names etc.

Revision of the group rules in each session encourages group participation in the setting of the rules and highlights the expectations for behaviour within the group. It also reminds everyone that the group environment is safe and therapeutic.

At the end of the session information on various community resources was given to the clients for them to engage in with support from carers, family members and other community support systems.

Handling Principles	Structuring	Presentation
■ Supportive ■ Positive Comments ■ Praise ■ Performance Evaluation ■ Orientation ■ Interpreted own behaviour ■ Listen to patient ■ Set norms ■ No active participation expected	■ Variety of topics ■ Appropriate Atmosphere ■ Partially Structured ■ Group Treatment	■ Clear, simple instructions ■ Clear steps ■ Expected standard clear ■ Regular Supervision ■ Feedback and review given ■ Non-judgemental

Handling principles:
• Facilitator supportive throughout the session and always listens to the client.
• Facilitator offers positive comments and reinforces this with praise specific to what's been done/achieved by the client. Other group members are also encouraged to praise and recognise other group members positive achievements and offer feedback on this.
• Group members are encourage to evaluate their performance in the wind down section, the facilitator reinforces this through the use of positive feedback around their participation in the session.
• Norms are addressed through the setting of group rules. Group members are encouraged to participate in the setting of the rules, however advise is also offered by the facilitator. Group rules also enable to group members to orientate themselves to the expectations of the group setting/environment and sets the standards for behaviour for the group members to follow.
• Group rules and expectations around behaviour also give the group members a standard to compare their own behaviour/reactions to in different scenarios.
• At this level clients are aware of the norms expected of them, however at the beginning compliancy may be infrequent. However, as the client attends more sessions and becomes more familiar with the expectations increased compliancy with the norms would be expected.

Structuring:
• Through using an umbrella topic a variety of aspects can be covered in greater depth and allowing more consideration.
• Groups are held in the same room and at the same time each session – this provides a consistency in environment. Group rules revised at the beginning of each session ensure that everyone knows the expectations of the group and that the environment is a safe and therapeutic environment.
• There is structure in the group in terms of a group plan being made, however a certain amount of flexibility for group members to deviate from the topic of conversation to raise any current problems/difficulties that they are having.

Presentation:

- Facilitator provides feedback and evaluation around the participation and performance during the session, also encourages the group members to evaluate their own and other group members participation.
- Facilitator non-judgemental around group members behaviour, performance or abilities during their participation in the session.

Imitative to Active Participation Resource Group

Facilitator has lower profile
All areas of social interaction covered
Abstract concepts included
Faster pace
More in-depth
Longer sessions
Less revision of previous sessions
Better carry over and implementation of
knowledge gained

Example Session: Communication Session
Welcoming and introduction
Group rules
Ice-breaker – Pictogram
Bridging – Discussion
Activity – Role - Play
Wind down – Discussion

Handling Principles	Structuring	Presentation
■ Recognition for effort ■ Appropriate behaviours modelled ■ Evaluate together ■ Set clear standards and expectations	■ Everyday situations meaningful to person ■ Duration of session ■ Group ■ Fixed routine within group	■ Indicate criteria/norms ■ Limited help ■ Evaluation encouraged ■ Expect input/ ideas

Verbal interplay in terms of assertion rather that just interaction

Conflict management and self-disclosure is facilitated
Communication no longer only egocentric and clients more able to develop deeper interpersonal relationships
Group rules driven and enforced by group members rather that the facilitator
Clients now aware of and expected to function according to the norms